CASTRO SAYS C.I.A. USES RAIDER SHIP

He Asserts Cuba Captured Small Boats From Vessel—Miami Owner Denies It

By The Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla., Oct. 31—Premier Fidel Castro charged last night that the Central Intelligence Agency was operating a raider ship called the Rex, and that she had been used in a sabotage mission against Cuba. He said two small boats from the Rex and several C.I.A. agents had been captured.

Premier Castro described the Rex as a 150-foot diesel vessel flying the Nicaraguan flag. He said she was based in West Palm Beach.

A vessel called the Rex, 174 feet long, returned to Palm Beach Monday and was tied up today in the Port of Palm Beach. She flies the Nicaraguan flag and carries large searchlights, radar and a crane on the stern. Two motor launches were missing from their davits.

The port director, Joel Wilcox, said, "The dockage is paid by the Sea Key Shipping Company from a post office box. I know nothing of the Rex's activities."

Oil Man Claims Ship

J. A. Belcher, a Miami oil company executive, told The Miami Herald that the Rex belonged to him, but denied that it had participated in raids against Cuba.

He said he bought the vessel from the Paragon Company, identified by The Herald as a Nicaraguan firm formerly owned by the family of Luis Somoza, an ex-President of Nicaragua.

Mr. Belcher told The Herald that for most of the year he had leased the Rex for electronic and oceanographic research to the international division of the Collins Radio Company of Dallas. He said the ship's captain, identified as Alexander Brooks, had told him the Rex had never been in Cuba's waters.

Premier Castro, in a radio

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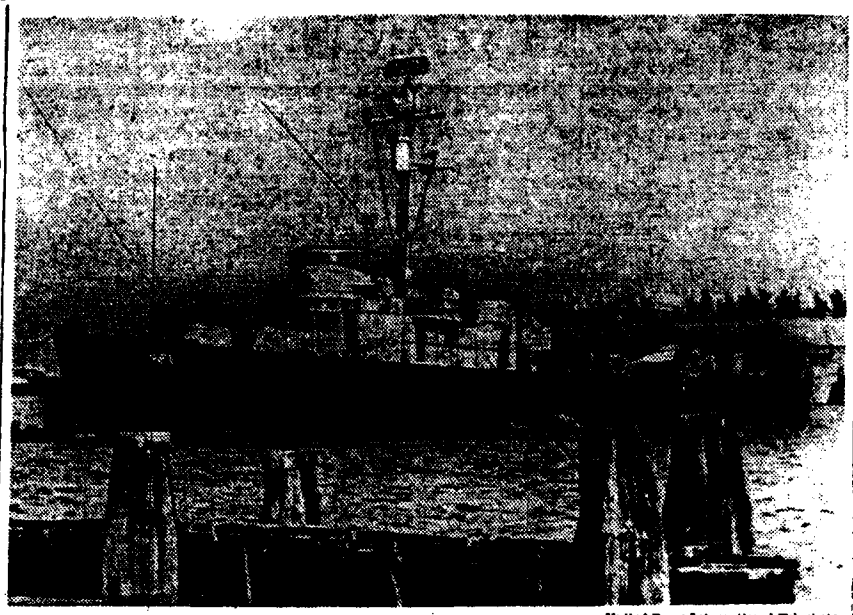

United Press International Telephoto

Rex, a 174-foot vessel with radar and hoisting equipment, at Palm Beach pier yesterday

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and television broadcast, said that the captured agents might face death sentences.

In his three-hour speech, the Premier accused the C.I.A. of "stepping up its activities against Cuba in the wake of the devastation caused by Hurricane Flora."

He accused the Central Intelligence Agency of murdering workers, landing weapons and infiltrators in Cuba, hiring saboteurs and using postal packages to send explosives into Cuba.

"This was the kind of aid the United States sent to Cuba after the hurricane," he said. "They thought they had their opportunity after the hurricane. This explains and justifies Cuba's rejections of the United States offer of aid."

There are two other mysterious vessels of Nicaraguan registry operating out of ports of Florida's southeast coast. One sometimes changes color.

The Leda is tied up at Port Everglades and the Port of Fort Lauderdale, 45 miles south of Palm Beach. She is registered from Greytown, Nicaragua, which is now known as San Juan del Norte.

A Miami man who knew a crewman on the Villaro said today, "She was a funny ship. She changed colors all the time. Sometimes the hull would be blue with a green deck. Other times it was gray with an orange deck. My friend said she was working in oil exploration."

Coast Guard headquarters in Miami said it had no listing for any of the ships or their companies.

Carries Crew of 5

WEST PALM BEACH, Oct. 31 (UPI) — The port operations director of the Port of Palm Beach, J. Sonny Jaudon, said today that the Rex was registered out of Bluefields, Nicaragua, and carried a Spanish-speaking crew of at least five.

Asked if the Rex belonged to the C.I.A., Mr. Jaudon would say no more than, "It could be."

"The Rex comes and goes at various intervals and uses the port here," Mr. Jaudon said. "We don't ask any questions. And they don't volunteer any information."

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Kennedy Won't Comment

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 31 — President Kennedy declined to comment at his news conference today on Cuba's latest charges that several agents of the Central Intelligence Agency had been captured and faced possible death sentences.

In reply to another question, the President repeated his belief that there had been a "marked decrease" in the number of Soviet troops stationed in Cuba. Although he refused to give figures, Mr. Kennedy said that in the last two months there had been further reductions. [Question 16, Page 14.]

Administration sources said that in recent weeks "several hundred" Soviet troops were known to have left, making the estimate of remaining forces "between 7,000 and 8,000." In addition, the Soviet Union was reported to have been taking out highly sophisticated electronic equipment and replacing it with more ordinary equipment, including tanks and jeeps.

Crowd Hails Actions

MIAMI, Oct. 31 (UPI)—A cheering crowd before the Presidential Palace tonight approved the confiscation of United States parcel post packages, rises in food prices and tighter sugar rationing.

Premier Castro announced the measures last night. He said tonight he had summoned the crowd "to pass some laws" to provide money to repair hurricane damage.

Shortly before he spoke tonight, the Havana radio announced another execution—the fourth in 24 hours.

In his speech, monitored here, the Premier also praised Herbert L. Matthews of The New York Times, who is visiting Cuba with his wife. He described him as "not a Marxist-Leninist newspaperman but one of liberal ideas."

Mr. Matthews' interview with Major Castro when he was fighting in the Sierra Maestra disproved the Batista Government's contention that Major Castro had been killed. Mr. Matthews is again visiting Oriente Province, Premier Castro said.

Mr. Matthews, a member of the editorial board of The New York Times, is visiting Latin-American countries.